

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-10

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NSAE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 JUSE-00 (ISO) W

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R 200900Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3948

DEA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 3547

BANGKOK PASS DEA R.D. ADDARRIO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, PINT, PFOR, LA

SUBJECT: ASSIGNMENT OF DEA PERSONNEL TO VIENTIANE

REF: BANGKOK 8845 (NOTAL)

1. WE ARE VERY MUCH AWARE THAT DEA AGENTS O'BRIEN AND MCGUIRE, BOTH TRAINED IN LAO LANGUAGE, HAVE HAD THEIR TRAVEL TO LAOS FROZEN BECAUSE OF RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS HERE. PATHET LAO NOW THOROUGHLY DOMINATE GOVERNMENT EMERGING BEHIND FACADE OF COALITION AND, AS A RESULT, OUR RELATIONS WITH LAO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS HAVE COOLED. WE ARE THEREFORE MAKING MAJOR REDUCTIONS IN OVERALL SIZE OF OUR MISSION.

2. IN ENFORCEMENT FIELD, CUSTOMS TEAM LEADER AND HIS DEPUTY WILL TERMINATE CAD OPERATIONS IN LAOS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. USAID/NAP PROGRAM, WHICH COORDINATES WITH LAO NATIONAL POLICE (LNP) AND LAO MILITARY POLICE (LMP), WILL END JUNE 30. MOREOVER, ON LAO SIDE, THE DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE GROUPE SPECIAL D'INVESTIGATION HAVE FLED LAOS, AS HAVE THE CHIEFS OF LNP NARCOTICS BUREAU AND LMP NARCOTICS BRIGADE. IN OTHER WORDS, WE FACE A NEW BALL GAME WITH NEW PLAYERS AND NEW RULES; THE DAYS OF AMERICAN NARCOTICS ADVISORS WORKING SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH LAO COUNTERPARTS

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IS A THING OF THE PAST.

3. WHAT THEN SHOULD THE DEA ROLE BE? IT ALL DEPENDS ON ATTITUDE OF LAO GOVERNMENT (PGNU). HOWEVER, GIVEN LONG-STANDING UNPOPULARITY OF NARCOTICS PROGRAM AND PATHET LAO INSPIRED ATTACKS AGAINST IT, IT IS PROBABLE THAT PGNU WILL ASK US TO END OUR ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT, AT LEAST IN ENFORCEMENT FIELD, BECAUSE IT "INFRINGES" ON LAO SOVEREIGNTY AND IS "MORE IN INTEREST OF U.S. THAN LAOS."

4. AS NOTED ABOVE, DURING THIS DIFFICULT PERIOD OF TRANSITION, WE ARE CUTTING BACK ON ALL ELEMENTS OF THE MISSION. WE ARE SEEKING TO ASSUME A POSTURE WHICH WOULD ENABLE US TO CONTINUE PROGRAMS WHICH PGNU AND USG AGREE ARE MUTUALLY DESIRABLE. AS REGARDS SPECIFICALLY DEA, WE WOULD HOPE TO KEEP AT LEAST A NARCOTICS ATTACHE AND PERHAPS ONE AGENT. WE ARE NOT SANGUINE THAT THIS WILL BE POSSIBLE BUT WE CAN TRY.

5. WE CAN PROCEED IN DIFFERENT WAYS:

A) EXTEND FULLETT BEYOND JUNE 7 DEPARTURE DATE TO ENABLE DEA TO BRIDGE THIS TRANSITIONAL PERIOD AND TEST SITUATION. (THIS WOULD BE VERY INCONVENIENT TO HIM AS HE HAS ALREADY PACKED.)

B) ALLOW FULLETT TO LEAVE AS PLANNED AND LET O'BRIEN COME UP FROM BANGKOK NOW TO COVER TRANSITION.

C) NVOSTPONE ASSIGNMENT OF NEW NARCOTICS ATTACHE UNTIL WE HAVE CLEARER PICTURE OF WHETHER HE SHOULD COME TO VIENTIANE AT ALL. (INCIDENTALLY, WE HAVE YET TO RECEIVE NAME/BIO DATA ON DEA'S PROPOSED REPLACEMENT FOR FULLETT.) WE SHOULD AVOID TDY ASSIGNMENTS AND ATTENDANT TURMOIL IN PERSONNEL MATTERS AT THIS TIME. IN ANY EVENT, WE DO NOT SEE POSSIBILITY OF PROCEEDING WITH ORIGINAL PLAN OF SETTING UP THREE-MAN OFFICE. WE VERY MUCH REGRET NECESSITY FOR DEA TO CHOOSE BETWEEN TWO AGENTS WHO HAVE DEVOTED MANY MONTHS OF ARDUOUS TASK OF LEARNING LAO LANGUAGE. WE HOPE THAT BANGKOK REGIONAL OFFICE CAN FIND JOB IN THAILAND FOR ONE OF THEM.

6. FULLETT IS SEEKING TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH NEW OFFICERS NEAMED TO GSI. WE SHALL REALLY NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE MEANINGFUL ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE NARCOTICS ATTACHE'S CONFIDENTIAL

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OFFICE UNTIL FULLETT HAS ASCERTAINED WHETHER PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP CAN BE DEVELOPED.

7. MOVEMENT OF ANY OFFICER TO VIENTIANE MUST BE SPECIFICALLY APPROVED BY EMBASSY BEFORE TRAVEL COMMENCES.
CHAPMAN

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NNN

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